

# Certifying sustainable palm oil

## *A science-based approach*

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# Sustainability addresses research

- Poverty alleviation
- People's rights
- Workers' rights
- Land grabbing
- Public policies
- Ethical investments
- Public/Private Partnership



- Agroecology
- Breeding
- Waste management
- Precision Agriculture
- Best agricultural practices
- GreenHouse Gas mitigation
- Integrated Pest Management
- Environmental services

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**ECOLOGICAL  
INTENSIFICATION**

# An original model for Biologists



## A giant perennial grass

Monocotyledoneous

*Areaceae* (Palmaceae)

## Two cultivated species

*Elaeis guineensis*

*Elaeis oleifera*

Interspecific hybrid

## Two different oils

Palm oil (palmitic)

Kernel oil (lauric)

# An original model for Agronomists



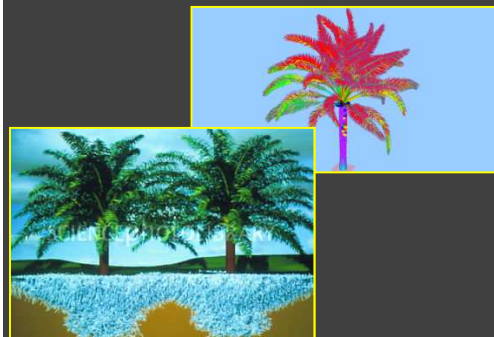
- The oil factory

- Almost 10X productivity compared to other oil crops
- Two different oils for many different uses
- A non-GMO virgin oil



- The robust fellow

- Adaptable to many different cropping systems
- Natural genetic tolerance to diseases
- No systematic use of pesticides



- The biomass factory

- Outstanding photosynthetic capacity
- High productivity of aboveground/underground biomass
- Impact on soil biology and structure
- Bunches account for 5% only of total biomass

# An original model for social studies



- ✓ Which prerequisites for efficient poverty alleviation?
  - Where, when, how and how much ?
- ✓ Which model of development?
  - Nucleus/Estate
  - Agroindustrial
  - Outgrowers: independent? cooperatives?
- ✓ Which role for multi-stakeholders initiatives ?
- ✓ Are Governments involved enough ?
- ✓ Which standards : RSPO, MSPO, ISPO ... ?
- ✓ Social impacts on the long term (FELDA, Malaysia)



# The Four Oil Palm Truths



1. Demand for oil palm will continue to increase in response to a growing and increasingly affluent global population.
2. Oil palm is one of the most profitable land uses in the humid tropics.
3. Oil palm plantations store more carbon than alternative agricultural land uses.
4. Native biodiversity within oil palm plantations is far lower than the natural forests they often replace.



# Getting into the public debate ...



*People do not know what they should know ...*

essais

## La palme des controverses

Palmier à huile et enjeux de développement

Alain Rival, Patrice Levang



### Huile de palme et environnement

Alain Rival

Alain Rival est biologiste, Correspondant pour la Filière Palmier au CIRAD (Centre de coopération internationale en recherche agronomique pour le développement).

#### La forêt primaire et la biodiversité sont-elles menacées ?



La relation entre plantations de palmier et déforestation est complexe : ni directe ni automatique. Les concessions sont accordées par les pouvoirs publics, souvent au niveau local, aux compagnies forestières qui exploitent le bois. Les forêts dégradées peuvent ensuite évoluer en friches, en savanes ou en terres cultivées sous l'action de l'homme. Les espaces déforestés ne sont que partiellement reconvertis en plantations de palmier. Ainsi, sur les 21 millions d'hectares de forêt primaire qui ont disparu en Indonésie entre 1990 et 2005, 3 millions seulement correspondent à la création de palmeraies [1]. Toutefois, cette relation directe a tendance à s'aggraver dans de nouveaux fronts pionniers, comme à Bornéo, où près de 30% des forêts primaires abattues ont été converties en palmier à huile [2], alors que les nouvelles plantations sont responsables en moyenne des 10% de la déforestation enregistrée en Indonésie et Malaisie [3].

# A few take home messages

- ✓ Improving sustainability requires **multidisciplinary and collaborative research**
- ✓ Public awareness has pushed **new approaches and new actors** into the sector
- ✓ **Large scale projects** based on Public/Private partnership are emerging
- ✓ Results are getting more **published and recognized**
- ✓ Research provides a credible and shared basis to **certification processes**
- ✓ There is **a need for education and capacity building on sustainability**
- ✓ Scientists must jump into the arena of the **public debate**





Thank you four your kind attention

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### Sustainable palm oil: creating a balance between consumer and environmental needs

kindly hosted by MEP Julie Girling

*"Palm oil can be grown sustainably."* WWF palm oil buyers scorecard 2013

*"Let's not ruin what is good about palm oil by boycotting it"* Greenpeace, 2013

Tuesday 18 March, 12.00-14.00 (*a sandwich lunch will be served*)

Room A4F384 - European Parliament, Brussels

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|---------------|---|
| 12.00         | Arrival and welcome of participants   |
| 12.30         | Welcome address by <b>Julie Girling MEP</b>   |
| 12.40 – 13.30 | <p>Discussion of three motions on sustainable palm oil by the speakers:</p> <p><b>Danielle Morley</b>, Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) European Director of Outreach &amp; Engagement</p> <p><b>Alain Rival</b>, senior agronomist at CIRAD &amp; author of the book "La palme des controverses - Palmier à huile et enjeux de développement"</p> <p><b>Adam Harrison</b>, senior policy officer on food and agriculture, WWF International</p> <p><b>Prof. Gerard Hornstra</b>, , emeritus nutrition professor at Maastricht University specialised in fatty acids</p> <p><b>Motions discussed:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Certified sustainable palm oil is available and the European agri-food industry is committed to supporting it</i></li><li>• <i>Sustainable palm oil in itself is not a harmful ingredient</i></li><li>• <i>Abandoning palm oil, i.e. palm oil-free claims, is not the route to a sustainable supply chain</i></li></ul> |

13.30 – 13.50 Questions and answers with participants

13.50 Concluding address



## Programme



**Registration:** Please register **before Thursday 13 March 2014** by sending an email to [Julie.girling@europarl.europa.eu](mailto:Julie.girling@europarl.europa.eu)

If you need an entry badge to the European Parliament, please send the following information: full name, date of birth, nationality, passport number and postal address.

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Informations complémentaires relevées:

21 mars 2014 : [http://www.newfoodmagazine.com/13329/news/industry-news/sustainable-palm-oil-creating-a-balance-between-consumer-and-environmental-needs/?utm\\_source=rss&utm\\_medium=rss&utm\\_campaign=sustainable-palm-oil-creating-a-balance-between-consumer-and-environmental-needs](http://www.newfoodmagazine.com/13329/news/industry-news/sustainable-palm-oil-creating-a-balance-between-consumer-and-environmental-needs/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=sustainable-palm-oil-creating-a-balance-between-consumer-and-environmental-needs)

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**Publication date:** 21 March 2014

**Author:** European Parliament

## Sustainable palm oil: creating a balance between consumer and environmental needs

Ms Julie Girling, MEP ECR UK welcomed a broad range of stakeholders to engage and debate with leading experts on sustainability and nutrition of palm oil. This commodity has come under increasing pressure and often unfairly so in the last few years. Ms. Girling opened the meeting saying "I wanted to create a forum where the facts could be aired and debated, allowing experts to exchange views with members of the European Parliament."

Palm oil has specific functional properties that make it a key ingredient in food manufacturing as part of the vegetable oils mix used. Palm oil as an ingredient in itself is neither bad nor good. He specified "Palm fruit oil contains 50% saturated and 50% unsaturated fatty acids and relatively high amounts of antioxidants. Total replacement of saturated fatty acids is impossible because texture, stability, and melt-in-the-mouth feel properties" Prof. Hornstra highlighted the need for better nutrition education and simpler communication to consumers.

Dr. Alain Rival, CIRAD informed participants "Palm oil can be a very important poverty alleviator. In fact, 40% of global palm oil is produced by smallholder farmers in South East Asia, Africa and South America."

The Indonesian Vice Minister of Trade H.E. Mr. Bayu Krisnamurthi insisted that smallholders do not have the resources to change their plantations and asked who will pay the cost of changing the system. He also queried the future of Indonesian palm oil in Europe. He made the following plea to the European Parliament 'People don't know about [sustainable] palm oil, let's make them know'

Dr. Rival stated that demand for oil palm will continue to increase in response to a growing and increasingly affluent global population due to its high yields, versatility and positive impact on economic development for producing countries. However, native biodiversity within oil palm plantations is far lower than the natural forests they often replace.

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The European Margarine Association



Chocolate, Biscuits & Confectionery of Europe



The EU Oil & Proteinmeal Industry



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Food industry participants underlined the importance of European manufacturers public commitments through national alliances in a number of European countries to only use certified sustainable palm oil by the end of 2015. Furthermore, they strongly opposed the use of zero palm oil claims which fuel misconceptions among consumers and undermine the positive advances towards a sustainable palm oil value chain.

Supply chain stakeholders, from producers to NGOs and food manufacturers, set up the Roundtable for Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) in 2004. This global scheme is necessary to ensure that the palm oil in products we buy is made to an acceptable sustainable standard, respectful of both the environment and workers.

Greenpeace’s Jonas Hulsens called for the industry to go beyond the RSPO and implement No Deforestation policies in order to eliminate forest destruction from their supply chain. Danielle Morley, RSPO said “All stakeholders share a common goal, RSPO is the best possible standard for all actors along the chain”. The standard is a consensus building model of continuous improvement. She extended an invitation to Greenpeace and other critics to come together to identify the gaps and define improvements going forwards.

When asked what the EU can do to encourage better demand for certified sustainable palm oil, Morley replied the EU Food Information to Consumers Regulation, coming into force in December 2014 and introducing labelling of individual oils, is an opportunity to inform consumers of the availability of sustainable palm oil.

Event organisers concluded that given the complexity of the palm oil value chain more education is needed. They relayed the speakers’ demand to go into the public debate and inform consumers of basic, important facts on sustainable palm oil. Ms. Girling and MEP colleagues agreed that this work would be of increased importance in the next European Parliament 2014 – 2019





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